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A SERIOUS

ADDRESS

TO THE

COMMON PEOPLE,

ON

ACCOUNT

Of the late

INSURRECTION

AT

HEXHAM, MARCH 9, 1761.

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Publiſhed for the BENEFIT *of the* POOR *of the Pariſh, where it was preached.*

NEWCASTLE:

Printed by J. WHITE, for W. CHARNLEY.

MDCCLXI.

[Price THREE-PENCE.]

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BRITISH MUSEUM

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NEWNHAM, MARCH 9, 1763.

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A SERIOUS ADDRESS, &c.

ROM. xiii. 1, 2.

Let every Soul be ſubject unto the higher Powers. For there is no Power but of God: The Powers, that be, are ordained of God. Whoſoever therefore reſiſteth the Power, reſiſteth the Ordinance of God; and they that reſiſt, ſhall receive to themſelves Damnation.

HAVING diſcharged the ſeveral Duties, annually due at this Time, to the Memory of our dear Lord; I take the very firſt Opportunity to beſpeak your ſerious Attention upon a Subject made neceſſary alas! by too many melancholy Events. And I do this the rather *now*, becauſe when the Paſſions have ſub-

ſided, Men are generally more ready and inclined to hearken to ſober Reaſon.

Now while God is pouring down upon us as great Plenty as any virtuous Heart can wiſh, and much more than the beſt of us deſerve; while we are juſt about to reap the happy Fruits of many ſignal and glorious Victories; and have before our Eyes all the ineſtimable Bleſſings of a long and virtuous Reign; is it not extremely ſtrange, that there ſhould be any Murmuring in our Villages, or any Complaining in our Streets? Yet ſuch indecent Murmurings, ſuch loud Complaints have been, as if the Government reigned only by Tyranny, and the Magiſtrates ruled by the heavieſt Oppreſſion.

O FOOLISH People, and unwiſe! How unmindful are you of the rich Bleſſings of Providence? How ungrateful to the beſt of Kings, and the mildeſt Adminiſtration? How little have *you* felt of the Miſeries of War? How happily ignorant are you of the Hardſhips and Cruelties of deſpotic Governments? Alas! I fear, your very Proſperity makes

you

you wanton; your very Liberty tempts you to be licentious. You are apparently diſcontented with your low Situation in Life; and therefore begin to hate and envy all Authority.

For do but turn impartial Eyes back upon your late Behaviour: How inconſiſtent was it with the amiable Character of *Britons?* How contrary to every Appearance of loyal Subjects? And how unworthy the Behaviour of reaſonable Men; but much more of ſober Chriſtians? What Infatuation could move you to ſuch daring, ſuch treaſonable Attempts? Why were you ſo deaf to every friendly Remonſtrance; nay and eſteemed thoſe your Enemies, who told you the Truth; and who endeavoured to ſave you from one of the blackeſt Crimes, and from apparent Deſtruction. For know, that the mildeſt Government beareth not the Sword in vain.

But it is much more the Province of my ſacred Office to convince you of your Sin, than of your Folly. And although, I hope,

many

many of you are, by this Time, returned to ſober and better Minds; both by the calm Suggeſtions of your own Thoughts; and by the ſeaſonable and very pathetic Diſcourſe, which has been put into ſome of your Hands; yet to diſcharge myſelf of my own private Duty among you, as well as to demonſtrate my ardent Affection for you, and moſt hearty Attachment to your Intereſts; I ſhall now repeat to you, aſſembled together in Public, much of what I have ſuggeſted, as Opportunity offered, to many of you in private.

I HAVE often told you that in order to become good Citizens, you muſt firſt become good Men. You muſt get right Notions concerning the Propriety of your Situation in Life; and of the ſeveral leading Duties, which your Creator requires of you, in it. For you are to know, and you muſt lay it ſeriouſly to Heart too, that God alone out of his infinite Wiſdom, has ordained the ſeveral Orders and Degrees, the ſeveral different States and Conditions of Men, in this World. Your Creator muſt certainly

certainly be beſt acquainted with all the Ends and Deſigns of your Creation; and what Place, in the grand Scale of Beings, is moſt proper for you.

Now ſince God has made us, and not we ourſelves; ſince he has appointed us all our fit Stations on Earth; if we complain of any Inconvenience, which ariſes *neceſſarily* out of our particular Station; our Clamours reach the very Heavens, and go much higher than againſt an earthly Throne. It is not an human Government that cauſed you or me to be born of ſuch and ſuch Parents, or in ſuch and ſuch a Country; all this was the immediate Appointment and Handy-work of God; determined by his Wiſdom, before we came into the World; and fixed by his Sovereign Power, when he gave us Being. Grant you that your low Station may expoſe you to ſome Hardſhips in Life, Will you lay theſe to the Door of any Magiſtrate? If God has appointed you for the meaner Purpoſes of Life; and for the harder Offices of Society and Government; will you rebel againſt

your Superiors, upon this Account? Is it reaſonable you ſhould charge *them* with Severity and Oppreſſion only for maintaining that Order, and due Subordination, which God has conſtituted, for the ſocial Health and Happineſs of the human Race? What is this elſe, but to attribute *that* as a Fault to your Governors, which is in Reality, the wiſe Syſtem of your Creator. For human Affairs in general, and the natural State of Government in particular, *neceſſarily* and *eſſentially* require different Stations, and different Orders among Mankind. "In a great Houſe (ſays the Apoſtle) there "are not only Veſſels of Gold, and of Sil-"ver, but alſo of Wood, and of Earth; "ſome for better, ſome for more ordinary "Uſes." 2 *Tim.* ii. 20. The Compariſon is very obvious and elegant, and therefore it is a Thought you often meet with in the ſacred Writings, *Rom.* ix. 21.

Now what I have been ſaying is to convince you, that there is no Power, but what is of God. The Powers, that be, are ordained of God. Higher Stations are not

not founded on the Pride of Man; but are a gracious Inſtitution of the univerſal Creator, calculated for the Good of the Whole, as well as for the Benefit of every Particular. "Whoſoever therefore reſiſteth "the Power, reſiſteth the Ordinance of God; "and they that reſiſt, ſhall receive to them-"ſelves Damnation." Whatever Chriſtian oppoſes the ſupreme Authority of the Country he lives in; oppoſes the immediate Act of Divine Providence, and as far as in him lies, fights againſt God; and of Conſequence, muſt expect the Puniſhment due to ſo atrocious a Crime.

THIS is the Apoſtle's plain Reaſoning. And therefore though you may perhaps in Caſes, which ſo nearly touch yourſelves, give little Credit to the Reaſoning of your Miniſters and others; yet for Heaven's Sake, renounce not the Authority of an Apoſtle of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. The Scriptures, you know, are intended to make you wiſe unto Salvation; wherefore if you allow your Prejudices to prevail ſo far, as to turn a deaf Ear to their prudent Inſtruc-

tions;

tions; and wilfully follow the Impulſe of blind Paſſion, Alas! what muſt become of you, in the End? You teach your very Children to honour and obey the King, and *all that are put in Authority under him*; to ſubmit themſelves to all their Governors, Teachers, ſpiritual Paſtors, and Maſters; and to order themſelves lowly and reverently to all their Betters; let me beſeech you then, to bethink yourſelves, how *your* late Behaviour comports with theſe noble Rules of Conduct, which you learnt and profeſt, in your very Childhood. Does not the Reflection of this put you to the Bluſh?

MANY of you may vainly imagine, perhaps, that you meant no Harm; nor did you go with any bad or bloody Deſign. But you ſhould reflect, that to ſubvert the Laws of your Country is to undermine your own Safety. You plainly ſee what it is to follow a Multitude to do evil. The Beginning of Strife is as when one letteth out Water: When you once enter upon it, you cannot tell where it will end. A very devouring Flame may ariſe from a

ſmall

ſmall Spark. For evil Communication will always corrupt good Manners. When you partake in a Crime you muſt not expect to be quite clear of the Guilt. How many wrong Acts did you commit, in doing yourſelves Right, as you were pleaſed to call it? Nay even to excuſe, is in ſome Meaſure to approve of a bad Undertaking; how much more then, did your Preſence give Countenance to this mad and wicked Action? You may judge from the melancholy Fate of *Korah* and his Company, *Numb.* xvi. how extremely hateful this Spirit of Diſobedience is, in the Sight of God, as well as Man; where no leſs than near fifteen Thouſand Souls were cut off, by the very Hand of the Almighty himſelf, for being concerned in a *Mob* againſt the juſt Authority of their Superiors; as you may read at large, in the 16th Chap. of *Numbers*.

But the Militia Law you ſay, is a very bad one, and therefore ought to be repealed. How; are *you* the only proper and infallible Judges, what is, or is not, expedient, for the Good and Well-being of

the whole Community? Pray how came Men of your Rank, by this extraordinary Knowledge? In what School have you learn'd all the Art of Government? Why did you not ſhew your great Wiſdom, much earlier, in framing Laws, and conducting Matters of State; which peradventure might have ſaved this Nation infinite Expence and Trouble? But in ſober Reaſon, can you really think yourſelves equal to the great and arduous Task of ruling Kingdoms? Are you, in Truth, ſo well acquainted with all the jarring Intereſts of Mankind, as to be able to ſettle them to the Satisfaction and Content of every Individual? Alas! do you not ſee the moſt glaring Impropriety (to ſay no worſe) in your taking upon you to cenſure, to judge, and condemn what is done, by the Rulers of our People. We live eaſy and happy in the Country: Our Thoughts, and our Cares extend but to our private Affairs: The Fruits of the Earth are the proper Objects of our Ambition. When Heaven therefore bleſſes us with Plenty, in our Baskets, and in our Stores; what have we

to

to do, but to receive the Bleſſings with chearful and grateful Hearts; and to ſend up to Heaven, in return, the pure Incenſe of Praiſe and Thankſgiving.

MATTERS of State are much above our Capacity: That high Province, by the very Appointment of Heaven, belongs to much abler Heads: And though in the various complicated Scene of human Affairs, ſome Appointments of the wiſeſt Governments may bear hard upon ſome Individuals; yet we can not, and therefore muſt not, conclude from hence, that the Law itſelf is not good, nor convenient upon the Whole.

SURELY if we receive the many, many Advantages of good Laws; we ought chearfully to ſubmit to ſome ſmall Inconvenience, in *one* Caſe; where the general Benefit and Safety of the Nation clearly demands it of us. But whatever you may think of the Act, which has occaſioned this melancholy Scene of Confuſion; yet it is well known, that there never was perhaps a Law framed with more Deliberation, nor

with

with better Views, or more national Intentions. Pray who can expect but to ſuffer ſomething, under God's general Judgments? And which of the Divine Judgments, is more general, or more fatal in all its Conſequences, than the Calamities of War? Yet how little have you felt of this direful overflowing Evil?

Now if the very Law, which you complain of, has kept Slaughter, Rapine, and Plunder at a Diſtance from you; do you eſteem all this as Nothing? Could you purchaſe ſo great a Bleſſing too dear? And yet, I am aſhamed to mention the Trifle, it has coſt you; a Trifle, I mean, to every Individual, who took the obvious Method of joining in common with their Pariſh, to prevent the greater Expence, which might perchance otherwiſe fall to their Lot. And if Perverſneſs of Temper withheld any of you from the prudent and ſafe Scheme, who can you blame but yourſelves?

BESIDES what real Hardſhip there was in the Act, it is now, in all Probability, hap-

happily over: Becauſe as it will be near two Years before there can be another general Allotment; we may comfortably hope, in that Time, the War will ceaſe; and then if it is even thought proper for you to learn the Uſe of Arms, for the future Defence of your Lives and Liberties; yet you will learn it nearer Home, and at no Expence.

THUS for your better Conviction, I have condeſcended to mention every the minuteſt Thing, which I have heard you complain of, in this Affair. Let me therefore, in the Concluſion, remind you again, that with regard to your particular Station in Life, it admits of no Remedy; it is the eſtabliſhed Order and Appointment of Providence. Some Difficulties, no doubt, does attend it, and what Mortal is without them? But ſhall the Thing formed ſay to him, that formed it, Why haſt thou made me thus? For ſince God, out of his free Bounty and Goodneſs, gave us Being at all; to him alone it muſt belong, of right, to fix every Man's natural Condition

dition in Life. Therefore we muſt take the Fate of this World patiently and contentedly, while God pleaſes to continue us in it.

We know there is a better State appointed for us, where the weary ſhall be at Reſt; where we ſhall never more hear the Voice of Sorrow; and where the Servant ſhall be for ever free from his Maſter. Hence whatever Part falls to your Share, at preſent, in Society, it is both your Duty and Intereſt to perform it well and chearfully. For the Laws of the Land are your greateſt Security; when you uſe any Endeavours to undermine, or obſtruct them; you are, in Reality, pulling with your own Hands, your Habitations over your Heads. Now your Magiſtrates only act under theſe very Laws, which are your grand Safeguard: They can neither add thereto, nor diminiſh therefrom: They are no more than the Servants of the Public, and the Miniſters of God to thee for good: And in general, have only their Trouble for their Pay.

Now

Now do but diveſt yourſelves of all Prejudice and Paſſion; and calmly view your own State, and the State of Society, in this Light, and what Foundation is there for the leaſt Complaint? Would you have Governors and Magiſtrates, to guard your Lives and Properties, to plan and conſult the Common-weal; to protect the Innocent, and to puniſh evil Doers?—Why, muſt they not then, in the very Nature of the Thing, be cloathed with proper Authority, and be endowed with ſuitable Abilities, to diſcharge faithfully this high Truſt? What would be the Conſequence therefore, if every private mean Man ſhould take upon him to direct them herein; and if he was not humoured, to interrupt, by Force, that very Office, which you confeſs is ſo neceſſary to the Well-being of Society?

Your neighbouring Gentlemen, under whoſe Wings you dwell ſafely, and out of whoſe Fortunes you eat your daily Bread; theſe very Perſons are appointed by the Government to be your Magiſtrates, to take Care of your Concerns, to adviſe you

in

in your Affairs, and to protect you from Murder and Rapine. Now would you not have deſired all this of Choice? Yet againſt theſe very Men, your Neighbours, your Landlords, your Friends and Protectors, did you lift up your rebellious Arm; and, O horrid! had well nigh been Aſſiſtants in ſpilling their innocent Blood. Indeed you may well ſtartle at the dreadful Thought; and though it pleaſed Providence to guard, by a handful of brave Men, *their* uſeful Lives; yet alas! remember, innocent Blood was ſhed; and O that God may never require it at your Hands!

MANY of *you*, I ſhould hope, were the leaſt guilty in this ſad Affair; yet you cannot but ſee to what horrid Exceſſes your *very Preſence* gave Encouragement: O then repent you of your Folly; let this be a ſevere Warning to you throughout your whole future Lives: It may be a good Leſſon, tho' bought alas! at a dear Price. "Submit your-
"ſelves therefore to every Ordinance of
"Man for the Lord's Sake: Whether it be
"to the King, as ſupreme; or unto Go-
"ver-

"vernors as unto them who are ſent by "him for the Puniſhment of evil Doers; "and for the Praiſe of them that do well." 1 *Pet.* ii. 13, 14.

MEDDLE not hereafter with Things above your Capacity; be humble and content in your ſeveral Stations; and always conſider yourſelves in your different Callings, as Fellow-workers with God, for the common Good and Benefit of Mankind.

AND if our gracious Sovereign, (for againſt his Authority you properly rebelled) ſhall think fit, out of mere Mercy and Tenderneſs, to make but a *few Examples* among you, for ſuch a daring hainous Crime, be you, that eſcape, ever duly thankful, for the great and undeſerved Lenity, that is ſhewn towards you. Remember likewiſe, it is your Magiſtrates who *now* ſtand in the Gap between you and Deſtruction: You clearly ſee the Power, they have, to revenge your late Affront: O let their forbearing Goodneſs then melt you down to Tears of Contrition; and let

all the Days of your future Life be a conſtant living Proof of the Sincerity of your Repentance.

AND now may the gracious God, who has already ſaved you from ſo eminent Danger, keep you ſtill under his Protection, and preſent you at laſt, waſhed and cleanſed, before the Preſence of his Glory with exceeding and never-fading Joy; for the Sake of his well-beloved Son, our all-gracious Redeemer and Advocate, Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous. *Amen. Amen.*

FINIS.

2 NO 66